

(Added Pub. L. 105-368, title VIII, §802(a), Nov. 11, 1998, 112 Stat. 3356.)

SUBCHAPTER VII—EDUCATION DEBT REDUCTION PROGRAM

SUBCHAPTER REFERRED TO IN OTHER SECTIONS

This subchapter is referred to in sections 7601, 7603 of this title.

§ 7681. Authority for program

(a) IN GENERAL.—(1) As part of the Educational Assistance Program, the Secretary may carry out an education debt reduction program under this subchapter. The program shall be known as the Department of Veterans Affairs Education Debt Reduction Program (hereafter in this subchapter referred to as the “Education Debt Reduction Program”).

(2) The purpose of the Education Debt Reduction Program is to assist in the recruitment of qualified health care professionals for positions in the Veterans Health Administration for which recruitment or retention of an adequate supply of qualified personnel is difficult.

(b) RELATIONSHIP TO EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.—Education debt reduction payments under the Education Debt Reduction Program may be in addition to other assistance available to individuals under the Educational Assistance Program.

(Added Pub. L. 105-368, title VIII, §803(a), Nov. 11, 1998, 112 Stat. 3357.)

§ 7682. Eligibility

(a) ELIGIBILITY.—An individual is eligible to participate in the Education Debt Reduction Program if the individual—

(1) is a recently appointed employee in the Veterans Health Administration serving under an appointment under section 7402(b) of this title in a position for which recruitment or retention of qualified health-care personnel (as determined by the Secretary) is difficult; and

(2) owes any amount of principal or interest under a loan, the proceeds of which were used by or on behalf of that individual to pay costs relating to a course of education or training which led to a degree that qualified the individual for the position referred to in paragraph (1).

(b) COVERED COSTS.—For purposes of subsection (a)(2), costs relating to a course of education or training include—

(1) tuition expenses;

(2) all other reasonable educational expenses, including expenses for fees, books, and laboratory expenses; and

(3) reasonable living expenses.

(c) RECENTLY APPOINTED INDIVIDUALS.—For purposes of subsection (a), an individual shall be considered to be recently appointed to a position if the individual has held that position for less than 6 months.

(Added Pub. L. 105-368, title VIII, §803(a), Nov. 11, 1998, 112 Stat. 3357.)

SECTION REFERRED TO IN OTHER SECTIONS

This section is referred to in section 7683 of this title.

§ 7683. Education debt reduction

(a) IN GENERAL.—Education debt reduction payments under the Education Debt Reduction Program shall consist of payments to individuals selected to participate in the program of amounts to reimburse such individuals for payments by such individuals of principal and interest on loans described in section 7682(a)(2) of this title.

(b) FREQUENCY OF PAYMENT.—(1) The Secretary may make education debt reduction payments to any given participant in the Education Debt Reduction Program on a monthly or annual basis, as determined by the Secretary.

(2) The Secretary shall make such payments at the end of the period determined by the Secretary under paragraph (1).

(c) PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENT.—The Secretary may make education debt reduction payments to a participant in the Education Debt Reduction Program for a period only if the Secretary determines that the individual maintained an acceptable level of performance in the position or positions served by the participant during the period.

(d) MAXIMUM ANNUAL AMOUNT.—(1) Subject to paragraph (2), the amount of education debt reduction payments made to a participant for a year under the Education Debt Reduction Program may not exceed—

(A) \$6,000 for the first year of the participant's participation in the Program;

(B) \$8,000 for the second year of the participant's participation in the Program; and

(C) \$10,000 for the third year of the participant's participation in the Program.

(2) The total amount payable to a participant in such Program for any year may not exceed the amount of the principal and interest on loans referred to in subsection (a) that is paid by the individual during such year.

(Added Pub. L. 105-368, title VIII, §803(a), Nov. 11, 1998, 112 Stat. 3357.)

§ 7684. Expiration of program

The Secretary may not make education debt reduction payments to individuals who have not commenced participation in the Education Debt Reduction Program before December 31, 2001.

(Added Pub. L. 105-368, title VIII, §803(a), Nov. 11, 1998, 112 Stat. 3358.)

CHAPTER 77—VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION

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AMENDMENTS

1999—Pub. L. 106-117, title VIII, §801(a)(2), Nov. 30, 1999, 113 Stat. 1586, added heading for subchapter III and items 7731 to 7734.

CHAPTER REFERRED TO IN OTHER SECTIONS

This chapter is referred to in sections 317, 318 of this title.

SUBCHAPTER I—ORGANIZATION; GENERAL

§ 7701. Organization of the Administration

(a) There is in the Department of Veterans Affairs a Veterans Benefits Administration. The primary function of the Veterans Benefits Administration is the administration of non-medical benefits programs of the Department which provide assistance to veterans and their dependents and survivors.

(b) The Veterans Benefits Administration is under the Under Secretary for Benefits, who is directly responsible to the Secretary for the operations of the Administration. The Under Secretary for Benefits may be referred to as the Chief Benefits Director.

(Added Pub. L. 102-83, §2(b), Aug. 6, 1991, 105 Stat. 399; amended Pub. L. 102-405, title III, §302(c)(1), (3), Oct. 9, 1992, 106 Stat. 1984.)

AMENDMENTS

1992—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 102-405 substituted “Under Secretary for Benefits” for “Chief Benefits Director” and inserted at end “The Under Secretary for Benefits may be referred to as the Chief Benefits Director.”

§ 7703. Functions of the Administration

The Veterans Benefits Administration is responsible for the administration of the following programs of the Department:

- (1) Compensation and pension programs.
- (2) Vocational rehabilitation and educational assistance programs.
- (3) Veterans' housing loan programs.
- (4) Veterans' and servicemembers' life insurance programs.
- (5) Outreach programs and other veterans' services programs.

(Added Pub. L. 102-83, §2(b), Aug. 6, 1991, 105 Stat. 399.)

SUBCHAPTER II—VETERANS OUTREACH SERVICES PROGRAM

SUBCHAPTER REFERRED TO IN OTHER SECTIONS

This subchapter is referred to in sections 3485, 4103 of this title; title 29 section 2913.

§ 7721. Purpose; definitions

(a) The Congress declares that the outreach services program authorized by this subchapter is for the purpose of ensuring that all veterans (especially those who have been recently discharged or released from active military, naval, or air service and those who are eligible for readjustment or other benefits and services under laws administered by the Department) are pro-

vided timely and appropriate assistance to aid and encourage them in applying for and obtaining such benefits and services in order that they may achieve a rapid social and economic readjustment to civilian life and obtain a higher standard of living for themselves and their dependents. The Congress further declares that the outreach services program authorized by this subchapter is for the purpose of charging the Department with the affirmative duty of seeking out eligible veterans and eligible dependents and providing them with such services.

(b) For the purposes of this subchapter—

(1) the term “other governmental programs” includes all programs under State or local laws as well as all programs under Federal law other than those authorized by this title; and

(2) the term “eligible dependent” means an “eligible person” as defined in section 3501(a)(1) of this title.

(Added Pub. L. 102-83, §2(b), Aug. 6, 1991, 105 Stat. 400.)

PRIOR PROVISIONS

Provisions similar to those in this section were contained in section 240 of this title prior to repeal by Pub. L. 102-83, §2(a).

REPORTS ON ACTIVITIES OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO ASSIST HOMELESS VETERANS

Pub. L. 103-446, title X, §1001(a), (b), Nov. 2, 1994, 108 Stat. 4678, 4679, as amended by Pub. L. 105-114, title II, §204, Nov. 21, 1997, 111 Stat. 2288, provided that:

“(a) ANNUAL REPORT.—(1) Not later than April 15 of each year, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a report on the activities of the Department of Veterans Affairs during the year preceding the report under programs of the Department for the provision of assistance to homeless veterans.

“(2) The report shall—

“(A) set forth the number of homeless veterans provided assistance under those programs;

“(B) describe the cost to the Department of providing such assistance under those programs;

“(C) provide any other information on those programs and on the provision of such assistance that the Secretary considers appropriate; and

“(D) evaluate the effectiveness of the programs of the Department (including residential work-therapy programs, programs combining outreach, community-based residential treatment, and case-management, and contract care programs for alcohol and drug-dependence or abuse disabilities) in providing assistance to homeless veterans; and

“(E) evaluate the effectiveness of programs established by recipients of grants under section 3 of the Homeless Veterans Comprehensive Service Programs Act of 1992 [Pub. L. 102-590] (38 U.S.C. 7721 note), and describe the experience of such recipients in applying for and receiving grants from the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to serve primarily homeless persons who are veterans.

“[(b) Repealed. Pub. L. 105-114, title II, §204(2), Nov. 21, 1997, 111 Stat. 2288.]”

HOMELESS VETERANS COMPREHENSIVE SERVICE PROGRAMS

Pub. L. 102-590, §§2-4, Nov. 10, 1992, 106 Stat. 5136-5139, as amended by Pub. L. 103-446, title X, §1003, Nov. 2, 1994, 108 Stat. 4679; Pub. L. 104-110, title I, §102(c)(1), (2), Feb. 13, 1996, 110 Stat. 769; Pub. L. 105-114, title II, §§202(c)(3), 203(b), Nov. 21, 1997, 111 Stat. 2287, 2288; Pub. L. 106-117, title IX, §903(1)-(3), Nov. 30, 1999, 113 Stat. 1587, provided that:

“[SEC. 2. Repealed. Pub. L. 105-114, title II, §202(c)(3), Nov. 21, 1997, 111 Stat. 2287.]

“SEC. 3. GRANTS.

“(a) AUTHORITY TO MAKE GRANTS.—(1) Subject to the availability of appropriations provided for under section 12 [set out below], the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, during [sic] shall make grants to assist eligible entities in establishing new programs to furnish, and expanding existing programs for furnishing, outreach, rehabilitative services, vocational counseling and training, and transitional housing assistance to homeless veterans.

“(2) The authority of the Secretary to make grants under this section expires on September 30, 2003.

“(b) CRITERIA FOR AWARD OF GRANTS.—The Secretary shall establish criteria and requirements for the award of a grant under this section, including criteria for entities eligible to receive such grants. The Secretary shall publish such criteria and requirements in the Federal Register not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act [Nov. 10, 1992]. In developing such criteria and requirements, the Secretary shall consult with organizations with experience in the area of providing service to homeless veterans and to the maximum extent possible shall take into account the findings of the assessment of the Secretary under section 107 of the Veterans' Medical Programs Amendments of 1992 [Pub. L. 102-405, 38 U.S.C. 527 note]. The criteria established under this section shall include the following:

“(1) Specification as to the kinds of projects for which such grant support is available, which shall include (A) expansion, remodeling, or alteration of existing buildings, or acquisition of facilities, for use as service centers, transitional housing, or other facilities to serve homeless veterans, and (B) procurement of vans for use in outreach to, and transportation for, homeless veterans to carry out the purposes set forth in subsection (a).

“(2) Specification as to the number of projects for which grant support is available, which shall include provision for no more than 25 service centers.

“(3) Appropriate criteria for the staffing for the provision of the services for which a grant under this section is furnished.

“(4) Provisions to ensure that the award of grants under this section (A) shall not result in duplication of ongoing services, and (B) to the maximum extent practicable, shall reflect appropriate geographic dispersion and an appropriate balance between urban and nonurban locations.

“(5) Provisions to ensure that an entity receiving a grant shall meet fire and safety requirements established by the Secretary, which shall include such State and community requirements that may apply, but fire and safety requirements applicable to buildings of the Federal Government shall not apply to real property to be used by a grantee in carrying out the grant.

“(6) Specifications as to the means by which an entity receiving a grant may contribute in-kind services to the start-up costs of any project for which support is sought and the methodology for assigning a cost to that contribution for purposes of subsection (c).

“(c) FUNDING LIMITATIONS.—A grant under this section may not be used to support operational costs. The amount of a grant under this section may not exceed 65 percent of the estimated cost of the expansion, remodeling, alteration, acquisition, or procurement provided for under this section.

“(d) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—The Secretary may not make a grant under this section unless the applicant for the grant—

“(1) is a public or nonprofit private entity with the capacity (as determined by the Secretary) to effectively administer a grant under this section;

“(2) has demonstrated that adequate financial support will be available to carry out the project for

which the grant has been sought consistent with the plans, specifications, and schedule submitted by the applicant; and

“(3) has agreed to meet the applicable criteria and requirements established under subsection (b) (and the Secretary has determined that the applicant has demonstrated the capacity to meet those criteria and requirements).

“(e) APPLICATION REQUIREMENT.—An entity described in subsection (d) desiring to receive assistance under this section shall submit to the Secretary an application. The application shall set forth—

“(1) the amount of the grant requested with respect to a project;

“(2) a description of the site for such project;

“(3) plans, specifications, and the schedule for implementation of such project in accordance with requirements prescribed by the Secretary under subsection (b); and

“(4) reasonable assurance that upon completion of the work for which assistance is sought, the program will become operational and the facilities will be used principally to provide to veterans the services for which the project was designed, and that not more than 25 percent of the services provided will serve clients who are not receiving such services as veterans.

“(f) PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS.—The Secretary may not make a grant to an applicant under this section unless the applicant, in the application for the grant, agrees to each of the following requirements:

“(1) To provide the services for which the grant is furnished at locations accessible to homeless veterans.

“(2) To maintain referral networks for, and aid homeless veterans in, establishing eligibility for assistance, and obtaining services, under available entitlement and assistance programs.

“(3) To ensure the confidentiality of records maintained on homeless veterans receiving services under the grant.

“(4) To establish such procedures for fiscal control and fund accounting as may be necessary to ensure proper disbursement and accounting with respect to the grant and to such payments as may be made under section 4.

“(5) To seek to employ homeless veterans and formerly homeless veterans in positions created for purposes of the grant for which those veterans are qualified.

“(g) SERVICE CENTER REQUIREMENTS.—In addition to criteria established under subsection (b), the Secretary shall, in the case of an application for a grant for a service center for homeless veterans, require that—

“(1) such center shall provide services to homeless veterans during such hours as the Secretary may specify and shall be open to such veterans on an as-needed, unscheduled basis;

“(2) space at such center will be made available, as mutually agreeable, for use by staff of the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Labor, and other appropriate agencies and organizations in assisting homeless veterans served by such center;

“(3) such center shall be equipped and staffed to provide, or to assist in providing, health care, mental health services, hygiene facilities, benefits and employment counseling, meals, transportation assistance, and such other services as the Secretary determines necessary; and

“(4) such center may be equipped and staffed to provide, or to assist in providing, job training and job placement services (including job readiness, job counseling, and literacy and skills training), as well as any outreach and case management services that may be necessary to carry out this paragraph.

“SEC. 4. PER DIEM PAYMENTS.

“(a) PER DIEM PAYMENTS FOR FURNISHING SERVICES TO HOMELESS VETERANS.—Subject to the availability of appropriations provided for under section 12 [set out below], the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, pursuant to

such criteria as the Secretary shall prescribe, shall provide to a recipient of a grant under section 3 (or an entity eligible to receive a grant under section 3 which after the date of enactment of this Act [Nov. 10, 1992] establishes a program which the Secretary determines carries out the purposes described in section 3) per diem payments at such rates as the Secretary shall prescribe by regulation for services furnished to any homeless veteran—

“(1) whom the Secretary has referred to the grant recipient (or entity eligible for such a grant); or

“(2) for whom the Secretary has authorized the provision of services.

In a case in which the Secretary has authorized the provision of services, per diem payments may be paid retroactively for services provided not more than 3 days before the authorization was provided.

“(b) LIMITATION.—The amount of per diem payments made with respect to a veteran under this section may not exceed one-half of the cost to the grant recipient (or other eligible entity) of providing such service.

“(c) IN-KIND ASSISTANCE.—In lieu of per diem payments under this section, the Secretary may, with the approval of the grant recipient, provide in-kind assistance (through the services of Department employees and the use of other Department resources) to a grant recipient (or entity eligible for such a grant) under section 3.

“(d) INSPECTIONS.—The Secretary may inspect any facility of an entity eligible for payments under subsection (a) at such times as the Secretary considers necessary. No per diem payment may be made to an entity under this section unless the facilities of that entity meet such standards as the Secretary shall prescribe.”

[Any action taken by Secretary of Veterans Affairs before Feb. 13, 1996, under provision of law amended by title I of Pub. L. 104-110 that was taken during period beginning on date on which authority of Secretary under such provision of law expired and ending on Feb. 13, 1996, considered to have same force and effect as if such amendment had been in effect at time of that action, see section 103 of Pub. L. 104-110, set out as a note under section 1710 of this title.]

ANNUAL REPORTS TO CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES

Pub. L. 102-590, §10, Nov. 10, 1992, 106 Stat. 5141, directed Secretary of Veterans Affairs, not later than May 1 of each of 1994, 1995, and 1996, to submit to Committees on Veterans' Affairs of Senate and House of Representatives a report on implementation of Pub. L. 102-590, including information on (1) number of veterans assisted, (2) services provided, and (3) Secretary's analysis of operational and clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of programs established under, or with assistance provided by, Pub. L. 102-590, prior to repeal by Pub. L. 103-446, title X, §1001(c), Nov. 2, 1994, 108 Stat. 4679.

AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS

Pub. L. 102-590, §12, Nov. 10, 1992, 106 Stat. 5142, as amended by Pub. L. 103-446, title X, §1004, Nov. 2, 1994, 108 Stat. 4679; Pub. L. 104-110, title I, §102(c)(3), Feb. 13, 1996, 110 Stat. 769; Pub. L. 106-117, title IX, §903(4), Nov. 30, 1999, 113 Stat. 1587, provided that: “There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act [see Short Title of 1992 Amendment note set out under section 101 of this title] (other than section 8 [amending section 3735 of this title]) \$48,000,000 for each of fiscal years 1993 through 1997 and \$50,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2000 and 2001. Nothing in this Act shall be construed to diminish funds for, continuation of, or expansion of existing programs administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to serve veterans.”

§ 7722. Outreach services

(a) In carrying out the purposes of this subchapter, the Secretary shall provide the out-

reach services specified in subsections (b) through (d). In areas where a significant number of eligible veterans and eligible dependents speak a language other than English as their principal language, such services shall, to the maximum feasible extent, be provided in the principal language of such persons.

(b) The Secretary shall by letter advise each veteran at the time of the veteran's discharge or release from active military, naval, or air service (or as soon as possible after such discharge or release) of all benefits and services under laws administered by the Department for which the veteran may be eligible. In carrying out this subsection, the Secretary shall ensure, through the use of veteran-student services under section 3485 of this title, that contact, in person or by telephone, is made with those veterans who, on the basis of their military service records, do not have a high school education or equivalent at the time of discharge or release.

(c) The Secretary shall distribute full information to eligible veterans and eligible dependents regarding all benefits and services to which they may be entitled under laws administered by the Department and may, to the extent feasible, distribute information on other governmental programs (including manpower and training programs) which the Secretary determines would be beneficial to veterans.

(d) The Secretary shall provide, to the maximum extent possible, aid and assistance (including personal interviews) to members of the Armed Forces, veterans, and eligible dependents with respect to subsections (b) and (c) and in the preparation and presentation of claims under laws administered by the Department.

(e) In carrying out this section, the Secretary shall assign such employees of the Veterans Benefits Administration as the Secretary considers appropriate to conduct outreach programs and provide outreach services for homeless veterans. Such outreach services may include site visits through which homeless veterans can be identified and provided assistance in obtaining benefits and services that may be available to them.

(Added Pub. L. 102-83, §2(b), Aug. 6, 1991, 105 Stat. 400; amended Pub. L. 102-590, §5, Nov. 10, 1992, 106 Stat. 5139.)

PRIOR PROVISIONS

Provisions similar to those in this section were contained in section 241 of this title prior to repeal by Pub. L. 102-83, §2(a).

AMENDMENTS

1992—Subsec. (e). Pub. L. 102-590 added subsec. (e).

INFORMATION TO ASSIST VETERANS RECEIVING EDUCATION BENEFITS

Pub. L. 101-237, title IV, §421, Dec. 18, 1989, 103 Stat. 2088, provided that:

“(a) IN GENERAL.—For the purpose of assisting individuals receiving education benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall prepare, and update periodically, a document containing a detailed description of the benefits, limitations, procedures, requirements, and other important aspects of the education programs administered by the Department.

“(b) DISTRIBUTION.—The Secretary shall, beginning in fiscal year 1990 but not before July 1, 1990, distribute copies of such document—

“(1) to each individual applying for benefits under an education program administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs and to each such individual at least annually in the years thereafter in which the individual receives such benefits;

“(2) to education and training institution officials on at least an annual basis; and

“(3) upon request, to other individuals significantly affected by education programs administered by the Secretary, including military education personnel.

“(c) FUNDING.—The Secretary shall use funds appropriated to the readjustment benefits account of the Department to carry out this section.”

OUTREACH SERVICES

Pub. L. 100-687, div. B, title XII, §1204, Nov. 18, 1988, 102 Stat. 4125, as amended by Pub. L. 102-4, §4, Feb. 6, 1991, 105 Stat. 15; Pub. L. 102-83, §6(k)(2), Aug. 6, 1991, 105 Stat. 409, provided that:

“(a) ONGOING OUTREACH PROGRAM.—(1) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct an active, continuous outreach program for furnishing to veterans of active military, naval, or air service who served in the Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam era information relating to—

“(A) the health risks (if any) resulting from exposure during that service to dioxin or any other toxic agent in herbicides used in support of United States and allied military operations in the Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam era; and

“(B) services and benefits available to such veterans with respect to such health risks.

“(2) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall annually furnish updated information on health risks described in paragraph (1)(A) to veterans referred to in paragraph (1).

“(b) INFORMATION IN AGENT ORANGE REGISTRY.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall take reasonable actions to organize and update the information contained in the Department of Veterans Affairs Agent Orange Registry in a manner that enables the Secretary promptly to notify a veteran of any increased health risk for such veteran resulting from exposure of such veteran to dioxin or any other toxic agent referred to in subsection (a) during Vietnam-era service in the Republic of Vietnam whenever the Secretary determines, on the basis of physical examination or other pertinent information, that such veteran is subject to such an increased health risk.”

SECTION REFERRED TO IN OTHER SECTIONS

This section is referred to in section 4214 of this title.

§ 7723. Veterans assistance offices

(a) The Secretary shall establish and maintain veterans assistance offices at such places throughout the United States and its territories and possessions, and in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, as the Secretary determines to be necessary to carry out the purposes of this subchapter. In establishing and maintaining such offices, the Secretary shall give due regard to—

(1) the geographical distribution of veterans recently discharged or released from active military, naval, or air service;

(2) the special needs of educationally disadvantaged veterans (including their need for accessibility of outreach services); and

(3) the necessity of providing appropriate outreach services in less populated areas.

(b) The Secretary shall establish and carry out all possible programs and services, including special telephone facilities, as may be necessary to make the outreach services provided for under this subchapter as widely available as possible.

(Added Pub. L. 102-83, §2(b), Aug. 6, 1991, 105 Stat. 401.)

PRIOR PROVISIONS

Provisions similar to those in this section were contained in section 242 of this title prior to repeal by Pub. L. 102-83, §2(a).

SECTION REFERRED TO IN OTHER SECTIONS

This section is referred to in section 4103A of this title.

§ 7724. Outstationing of counseling and outreach personnel

The Secretary may station employees of the Department at locations other than Department offices, including educational institutions, to provide counseling and other assistance regarding benefits under this title to veterans and other persons eligible for benefits under this title and to provide outreach services under this subchapter.

(Added Pub. L. 102-83, §2(b), Aug. 6, 1991, 105 Stat. 401.)

PRIOR PROVISIONS

Provisions similar to those in this section were contained in section 243 of this title prior to repeal by Pub. L. 102-83, §2(a).

SECTION REFERRED TO IN OTHER SECTIONS

This section is referred to in section 4214 of this title.

§ 7725. Use of other agencies

In carrying out this subchapter, the Secretary shall do the following:

(1) Arrange with the Secretary of Labor for the State employment service to match the particular qualifications of an eligible veteran or eligible dependent with an appropriate job or job training opportunity, including, where possible, arrangements for outstationing the State employment personnel who provide such assistance at appropriate facilities of the Department.

(2) In consultation with the Secretary of Labor, actively seek to promote the development and establishment of employment opportunities, training opportunities, and other opportunities for veterans, with particular emphasis on the needs of veterans with service-connected disabilities and other eligible veterans, taking into account applicable rates of unemployment and the employment emphases set forth in chapter 42 of this title.

(3) Cooperate with and use the services of any Federal department or agency or any State or local governmental agency or recognized national or other organization.

(4) Where appropriate, make referrals to any Federal department or agency or State or local governmental unit or recognized national or other organization.

(5) At the Secretary of Veterans Affairs discretion, furnish available space and office facilities for the use of authorized representatives of such governmental unit or other organization providing services.

(6) Conduct and provide for studies in consultation with appropriate Federal departments and agencies to determine the most ef-

fective program design to carry out the purposes of this subchapter.

(Added Pub. L. 102-83, §2(b), Aug. 6, 1991, 105 Stat. 401.)

PRIOR PROVISIONS

Provisions similar to those in this section were contained in section 244 of this title prior to repeal by Pub. L. 102-83, §2(a).

§ 7726. Annual report to Congress

The Secretary shall include in the annual report to the Congress required by section 529 of this title a report on the activities carried out under this subchapter. Each such report shall include an appraisal of the effectiveness of the programs authorized in this subchapter and recommendations for the improvement or more effective administration of those programs.

(Added Pub. L. 102-83, §2(b), Aug. 6, 1991, 105 Stat. 402.)

PRIOR PROVISIONS

Provisions similar to those in this section were contained in section 245 of this title prior to repeal by Pub. L. 102-83, §2(a).

SUBCHAPTER III—QUALITY ASSURANCE

§ 7731. Establishment

(a) The Secretary shall carry out a quality assurance program in the Veterans Benefits Administration. The program may be carried out through a single quality assurance division in the Administration or through separate quality assurance entities for each of the principal organizational elements (known as “services”) of the Administration.

(b) The Secretary shall ensure that any quality assurance entity established and operated under subsection (a) is established and operated so as to meet generally applicable governmental standards for independence and internal controls for the performance of quality reviews of Government performance and results.

(Added Pub. L. 106-117, §801(a)(1), Nov. 30, 1999, 113 Stat. 1585.)

EFFECTIVE DATE

Pub. L. 106-117, title VIII, §801(b), Nov. 30, 1999, 113 Stat. 1586, provided that: “Subchapter III of chapter 77 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), shall take effect at the end of the 60-day period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act [Nov. 30, 1999].”

SECTION REFERRED TO IN OTHER SECTIONS

This section is referred to in sections 7732, 7734 of this title.

§ 7732. Functions

The Under Secretary for Benefits, acting through the quality assurance entities established under section 7731(a), shall on an ongoing basis perform and oversee quality reviews of the functions of each of the principal organizational elements of the Veterans Benefits Administration.

(Added Pub. L. 106-117, §801(a)(1), Nov. 30, 1999, 113 Stat. 1585.)

§ 7733. Personnel

The Secretary shall ensure that the number of full-time employees of the Veterans Benefits Administration assigned to quality assurance functions under this subchapter is adequate to perform the quality assurance functions for which they have responsibility.

(Added Pub. L. 106-117, §801(a)(1), Nov. 30, 1999, 113 Stat. 1585.)

§ 7734. Annual report to Congress

The Secretary shall include in the annual report to the Congress required by section 529 of this title a report on the quality assurance activities carried out under this subchapter. Each such report shall include—

(1) an appraisal of the quality of services provided by the Veterans Benefits Administration, including—

(A) the number of decisions reviewed;

(B) a summary of the findings on the decisions reviewed;

(C) the number of full-time equivalent employees assigned to quality assurance in each division or entity;

(D) specific documentation of compliance with the standards for independence and internal control required by section 7731(b) of this title; and

(E) actions taken to improve the quality of services provided and the results obtained;

(2) information with respect to the accuracy of decisions, including trends in that information; and

(3) such other information as the Secretary considers appropriate.

(Added Pub. L. 106-117, §801(a)(1), Nov. 30, 1999, 113 Stat. 1585.)

CHAPTER 78—VETERANS' CANTEEN SERVICE

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7810.	Exemption from personnel ceilings.

AMENDMENTS

1991—Pub. L. 102-83, §4(b)(1), (2)(E), Aug. 6, 1991, 105 Stat. 404, 405, substituted “Secretary” for “Administrator” in item 7802.

Pub. L. 102-40, title IV, §402(a), (c)(1), May 7, 1991, 105 Stat. 238, 239, redesignated chapter 75 of this title as this chapter and renumbered items 4201 to 4210 as 7801 to 7810, respectively.

1988—Pub. L. 100-322, title IV, §§412(b), 414(b)(2), May 20, 1988, 102 Stat. 548, 549, added items 4209 and 4210.

§ 7801. Purpose of Veterans' Canteen Service

The Veterans' Canteen Service (hereafter in this chapter referred to as the “Service”) in the Department is an instrumentality of the United States, created for the primary purpose of making available to veterans of the Armed Forces who are hospitalized or domiciled in hospitals